

What do you think about disability?

Our names are Mark, Mairian, Tom and Colin. We are doing a project at Leeds University. We have been talking to disabled children. We have met some children at school. We have met other children in clubs and at home. All the children we have met are disabled. This newsletter describes some of the things they told us.

DISABILITY



Some children thought that all disabled people use wheelchairs. Some children said disability should include people with learning difficulties. Most children said that disability can mean different things. Some children wanted to meet other disabled people. Some children don't want people to think they are disabled.

What do you think?

FAMILY



Everyone's family is different. Most disabled children do not have another disabled person in their family. Some have a brother or sister who is disabled. Some children say that their parents are their best friends. Some children think that their parents protect them too much and don't let them do what other children do. Some children think that parents and foster parents don't want disabled children.

What do you think?

FRIENDS



Some children have lots of friends. Some disabled children say they have no friends at all. Some have friends at school but don't know anyone who lives near them. Some children feel very lonely in the school holidays. Some have friends who are disabled. Some children say that other children won't play with them because they are disabled. Some say it is hard to find friends. These are some of the things they said:

"You always know that there's someone disabled like you but you never see them."

"I feel like I've been left out a lot. Like having fun outside in park and I get very tired and I can't stand up for long."

"My mate, he acts like my dad, he thinks he knows what's best for me when he doesn't. He knows sod all about that."

What do you think?

ATTITUDES



Lots of children wanted to tell us about bad attitudes towards disabled people. Many disabled children have been bullied at school. Some children have been bullied at home too. Children say they don't like being stared at when they go out. They say that they don't like to be called names. Here are some of the things they said.

"I've had people calling me names, really bad names."

"People pick on you. They call you spastic. They even laugh at you if you fall down."

"Sometimes you get beat up you know. I've been beaten up."

"When you're in public, people stare at you."

"They think that you can't walk and speak."

"They think that if you are disabled physically then you are disabled mentally."

"It's because they don't understand, because they're not disabled."

"...racism and disability prejudice. They're all the same thing really."

What do you think?

SCHOOL



Lots of children wanted to tell us about their school. Some children like their teachers. Some said their teachers didn't understand about disability. Some children do not like to sit with an adult in lessons. Some children have to travel a very long way to get to their school. Some find it difficult to get to their lessons. Sometimes they are late. Some children do not have time to finish their work. Some disabled children from different schools made friends when they met each other. These are some of the things they said.

"I think its better when there is a few or quite a lot of people who are disabled in a school because you don't feel alone."

"I prefer it when I haven't got support because its more interesting. You can talk to your mates."

"They are always pushing you to do stuff...which you probably can't do."

"I don't think the special needs people here could organise a piss up in a brewery."

What do you think?

GOING OUT



Some children cannot get out of their house without help. Some children cannot get to the shops or the park. Some places do not let disabled people in. Some teenagers are not allowed to go out on their own. This is what they said.

"When you go round the shops you can't get in the shops 'cos the steps and that, they're too high to get in."

"That's the problem with big cities, they don't think about disabled people."

"I think...they need to be more ramps and more transport for disabled people."

"I think it's really unfair when they don't have any disabled facilities anywhere."

"You don't get to do all the other things that other people get to do."

"You can't get on the bus."

"Getting a job is harder."

What do you think?

HOSPITALS AND DOCTORS



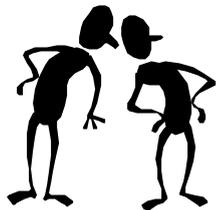
Some disabled children have to go to hospital a lot. Some children go to school in the hospital. Some children like to talk about medical things. They told us about doctors and nurses and operations. Some children don't think those things are important. Some children were frightened about operations. This is what one boy said.

"Because of all medical stuff when I was a little boy, when I were a baby. And all the medicals I were in, and I were in about ten ambulances and that made me really interested."

What do you think?

CAN YOU THINK OF SOMETHING TO PUT IN THIS SPACE?

GETTING INVOLVED



Lots of children wanted to help us with our project. Some children have helped to set up an Advisory Group in Leeds. This group will encourage disabled children to tell the Council what they think. These are some of their ideas.

- Public signs should be easier to read.
- Schools should have more equipment and activities for disabled children.
- People with learning difficulties should have more choice in further education.
- More buildings should have wheelchair access.

What do you think?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



We want your ideas for our next newsletter. Are you between 11 and 16 years old? We need more disabled young people to help us find out about these things...

family...friends...attitudes...school...going out...hospitals...getting involved

If you think you can help us then we would like to hear from you. We can come to your school or your home, or you can send us something in the post. You can phone Leeds 2334417 or write to this address:

Mark Priestley
Disability Research Unit
University of Leeds
LEEDS
LS2 9JT



If you have a computer with e-mail then you can send a message to m.a.priestley@leeds.ac.uk

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